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Public Affairs

Corps Facts

Wahpeton, N.D., Flood Reduction Project

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Project Background

The 1997 flood in the Red River basin generated a strong determination by all levels of government to quickly identify, evaluate and implement permanent flood reduction projects for existing urban cities along the Red River of the North. The communities included the city of Wahpeton, N.D., and its sister city, Breckenridge, Minn. The 1997 flood nearly devastated Wahpeton. Only heroic flood fighting kept the city from sustaining significant damages. As a result, there was strong public and interagency recognition that the city needed a permanent flood reduction project. In order for the federal government to become involved, a partnership was formed among the city, state and federal governments that combined and leveraged funding and expertise. This partnership became official on June 18, 1999, when the parties signed a feasibility cost sharing agreement. This partnership resulted in the formulation of a permanent project that is in the interest of the federal government and the city and led to the signing of a project cooperation agreement in June 2001.

Wahpeton is located in Richland County, approximately 55 miles south of Fargo, N.D. The Red River of the North and the Bois de Sioux River bound the city on the east. The confluence of the Ottertail River with the Red River of the North is located at Wahpeton. The city of Breckenridge lies across the Red River of the North and is concurrently working with the Corps of Engineers on its own flood control project. Levee stages of both projects will need to be completed together in order to prevent project-induced, levee-related damages to either community.

Project Description

The Wahpeton flood control project consists of a permanent levee system to protect the city and a flood easement to keep breakout flood flows from being blocked in the future. Additionally, the project will include recreational features, such as multi-purpose trail systems and overlooks. The Wahpeton flood control project is estimated to cost \$16.025 million. The Water Resources Development Act, or WRDA, 2007 raised the maximum level of federal participation from \$7 Million to \$12 Million for the Wahpeton project. The state of North Dakota is assisting the city with construction of the flood control project.

Material acquisition for construction of the project began in the summer of 2002. The Corps awarded a construction contract for stage one in spring of 2003. Stage one included building pumping stations, ponding areas and related interior flood control features. Construction of this stage is complete.

Stage two includes building the in-town levee features from the airport to Sixth Avenue South. Construction is planned for the spring of 2008 in conjunction with the first stage of levee construction for the Breckenridge project.

Stage 3A includes levees from Sixth Avenue South to Fourth Avenue South and is planned for construction starting fall 2008. Stage 3B includes the remaining levees to Seventeenth Avenue North and is anticipated for completion in 2010, pending a federal appropriation for both the Wahpeton and Breckenridge projects. Completion of levee stages of the Wahpeton project is tied to the Breckenridge project.

Authority

Section 205 of the 1948 Flood Control Act, as amended, authorizes construction of small projects for flood control and related purposes not specifically authorized by Congress. Projects recommended for construction must be economically justified and limited to a federal cost of \$7 million.